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## THE SOCIAL IDEAL AND THE DOGMA OF CREATION.

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THE title of this article may easily suggest that its purpose is directly theological. But with theology as such it has nothing to do. The aim is sociological and historical. The object is to call attention to a conception which is likely to become one of the precipitation points of social feeling. It is worth our while to run the risk of committing the most gratuitous of all errors—as prophecy has been wittily described—if there be the slightest chance of foreseeing such a precipitation point. And this pleasure of prophecy is a legitimate pleasure, if, after every enjoyment of it, the prophet devotes himself to a year's hard labor on the interpretation of facts.

Our age is infinitely interesting. And perhaps the most interesting thing about it is the number of interests that are nowadays compelled to be neighborly to each other. One of the means of grace, insufficiently emphasized in the average ordination sermon, is the grace of elbow-rubbing. In this particular grace our own age is exceedingly rich. The world is fast acquiring a single nervous organism. What touches the other side of the globe today shall touch us tomorrow. All the interests of history are being forced to rub elbows. And all the ideal interests which have gone into the world's religions are pressing one upon another, and demanding some sort of synthesis upon which earnest religious feeling may lay hold. It is worth while, then, to inquire into the possible effect of the present social movement upon religious beliefs, and the line of dogmatic expression which the social will is likely to take.

That the social will is sure to appropriate and adapt old dogmas, or create new ones, a knowledge of the laws of social psychology does not permit us to doubt. The term dogma has been for some time in a state where both the critical and the

conservative mind could not come at it except under more or less morbid conditions. The critical mind looks upon dogma with a suspicion that is amply justified by the harm dogma may do when it is backed by infallibility. And for the conservative mind dogma has become in many cases an unwholesome thing, by reason of the self-conscious effort going with the attempt to remain dogmatic in an aggressively critical age. But when once the morbid and unwholesome associations of dogma shall have passed away, when infallibility in every form shall have been disclaimed, one must fly in the face of psychology, if he is to doubt that the social will must either adopt and adapt old dogmas or create new ones. For, under average conditions, and in an age that knows fairly well what it wants, dogma is just as inevitable as poetry. Like poetry it is a means whereby the working will in humanity, bent upon making its fortune in history, translates what is dear to it into terms of what is deepest in the universe. Periods of negation and dissolution and distraction paralyze the dogmatic process. But let a given period once know itself well enough to know what it wants, let its feeling once begin to move toward a fairly coherent synthesis, and the output of dogma begins again. Criticism may hope to chasten this process and refine the product. But unless criticism would throw away its guiding power, it must not expect to stay the process. Whatever the critics may do or say, humanity will insist upon its right to keep house.

When I use the word ideal I mean a view of the universe, of one kind or another, that speaks to the heart with authority, and lays upon the will a complete obligation. The view may be this or that. It may be some form of speculative idealism, like Plato's, or a speculative materialism, like that of Democritus. So long, however, as it is a real view, that is, a conception that consciously and deliberately aims to take account of the total of being, it has in itself the making of an ideal. But, to the end that it may show its mettle and become a true ideal, it must possess the right of eminent domain in the interpretation of the universe, exercise the right of way, and be endowed with authority. Until it attains authority, it is a bare idea, not an ideal—an ideal being

an idea that has acquired the right to levy taxes, and muster the resources of the inner man into its service.

Since the ideal is, on the one side, a view of being taken in its totality, and on the other, a view that has taken fast hold on the working will, it follows that the heart of all ideals is a conviction touching the sincerity of the universe. For the bare attempt to get a view of the universe involves the assumption that all its parts are somehow in touch with one another. And when the view begins to assume an air of authority, to impose obligations upon the conscience and lay taxes upon the will, it is assumed that the inner resources of the universe are at the disposition of the ideal, that the ideal brings us, in some measure, a true word concerning those resources. The sincerity of the universe is the very marrow of all the creeds, and of all the great working convictions. Even the thoroughgoing dualist goes upon this belief, seeing that those portions of the universe which set themselves off from the substance of the universe, always end, in his interpretation, by being sponged off the slate. In the extremest estimate of the work of Satan, hell becomes the cesspool of the universe, its very horrors bearing witness to the efficiency of the spiritual drainage, and so paying tribute to the merciless sincerity that rules at the heart of things.

It does not concern me, in this paper, to inquire whether the process, whereby the being and idea of God is got at, is one of subjective experience or objective revelation, or both. It does not matter to me in this connection whether the idea of God is a gift to us, a true word from the heart of things about the heart of things, or an interpretation imposed by us upon the universe that besets and invades our consciousness. The sole point is that the interpretation which we impose, even though it be purely an interpretation, in no measure a revelation, is an exercise of thought regarding which we may not do as we please. It is as indispensable as eating and drinking, as native to us as breathing. It is something which we must go through with, if we are to continue to keep house on the earth. In the long run, enduring need governs and guides theory. Our deepest need, as a race, is ideals. When we say God, we mean the unity and

coherence of all ideals. And if the idea of God be our own creation, none the less we must go on creating it in some form or other. And that is so, because the pith of all ideals, of all views and ideas that have power to bind and loose the working will, is a conviction regarding the sincerity of the universe.

In order to keep house in history, to finish our battle with the wild beasts of the earth which we have so nearly fought through, and then to carry forward the far harder battle with the wild beast in ourselves, in order to build a human commonwealth whose aim shall be to bring the wherewithal of self-knowledge and self-mastery within the reach of an ever increasing number of men, we must go on imposing our interpretations upon the mystery of things. We must have views. And those views must become ideals. And all our ideals, no matter what their special color and shape, must, in one way or another, draw their sap from the belief that the universe, after one fashion or another, is of a piece.

By social ideal I mean something which may seem very vague indeed, yet is definite enough for my purpose. The social ideal means that an authoritative obligation is laid upon us that we shall have ideals and that each ideal shall be social in its make and bent. As to what any given ideal must look like and what its contents must be, I do not need to say a word. The ideals may indefinitely vary. The institutes of western farmers where the work of clover as a subsoiler is discussed with deep gravity, enshrine an ideal. That notable society all of whose members pledge themselves to bequeath their skulls to the society itself, for purposes of comparative study, enshrines another. Ideals change from age to age and they widely differ within any given age. But the ideal is satisfied, because the ideal is that there shall be ideals.

And the social ideal is that every ideal shall seek to spread itself, that the particular form of good which it admires and serves shall possess a measure of the missionary impulse, and so shall seek to become a common good. When Socrates cleared the ground for Plato, he did it by using the Sophists' maxim: "Man is the measure of truth." But he insisted upon being

thorough with the maxim. He would not let the saddlemaker stay in the shop, the soldier in the camp, the poet on his Parnassus. He made them all come within a single definition. Out of the Socratic definition the Platonic idea arose. It is thus that the idea always rises. And the moment it becomes an ideal and puts on the robes of authority, it seeks out, in their home and haunts, the various individuals from whom it derived its definition. Socrates makes himself the gadfly to the Athenian horse. Plato writes his "Republic." The idea or view, once become an ideal, seeks to communicate itself. Therefore the phrase "social ideal" is a pleonasm, a necessary pleonasm. The social ideal is that there be social ideals, that they shall have reproductive power, and that each ideal, however widely it may differ from neighboring ideals, shall have thus much in common with them; namely, that it shall strive to make the good it admires and serves a common good.

Ranke, in his *History of the Popes*, finely says: "The European commonwealth has . . . at no time been subjected to the dominion of pure force; at all periods it has been imbued with the effect of thoughts and opinions; no enterprise of moment can succeed, no power can rise into universal influence, without immediately suggesting to the minds of men the ideal of a forthcoming advancement of society." This is a general rule of experience. Without it the bottom would drop out of the social establishment. The life of society is in the keeping of the idea of right. Now that idea, by its very nature, draws after it the conception of a good which must communicate itself in order to preserve itself. Look where we will into the history of enduring states, we shall find the amplest illustration of this rule. The selfishness or ignorance or prudence of men may do its utmost to block the wheels. None the less, it holds true, without exception, that no form of human society can long endure without setting on foot a movement for the extension of rights. The idea of right is the ideal conceived as law, as the ground of political obligation. And it inheres in the very nature of the ideal, that it shall be self-communicating, that its good shall seek to diffuse itself.

My aim in this article is to show that the social ideal, taking the sincerity of the universe as the article of faith wherewith the possibility of a sane and progressive human society stands or falls, must either appropriate or shape anew for itself a dogma of creation. I shall try to make my point by a brief study (1) of the history of Prophetism in Israel; (2) of the experience of Christianity in the Mediterranean world, and (3) of the problem of contemporary society.

Whether the idea of God in Israel is a gift or an acquisition or both, it enables us to feel the pulse of the deepest experience of Israel. Its quality betokens the main quality of Israel's purpose. Its attitude toward the world indicates the attitude of the higher Israel toward Israel at large. Now the contrast between the divine unity as the prophets conceived it and the divine unity as Aristotle, the most representative of Greeks, conceived it, may fairly be expressed as a difference between the unity of life divine and human when it is conceived in terms of conscience, and the same unity when it is conceived in terms of reason. Not that reason and conscience can be separated. They are two aspects of the same unity. Yet they are distinct. The deepest word that Aristotle has to say about God is that He is *νόησις νοήσεως*; God's thought is pure thought unmixed with sensation. But the prophets' deepest word about God is that He is Holy and Creative Will. God is—if one may so speak—an infinite conscience. There rises up out of Israel's own life or there is revealed through it a mighty and masterful purpose, which faces contemporary Israel with an authority not to be withstood. Armed with that purpose Amos declares that Israel must perish because its rich folk sell its poor folk for a pair of shoes. In the strength of that purpose the prophets declare that the Jewish state is lighter than vanity in the eternal scales, because its men of power and prerogative have no regard for the rights of the weak. The problem of Israel is a problem of conscience.

The thought of the unity of God necessarily rises before men whenever self-consciousness becomes deep and clear; for polytheism, taken to heart, would involve the incoherence and the

dissipation of self-consciousness. But the main quality of the divine unity, as the prophets viewed it, a quality that sets it apart from other conceptions of the divine unity entertained in antiquity, is its invincible seriousness. It takes its own purpose concerning the betterment of the lowly in Israel with infinite earnestness. The divine being stakes its whole self upon the correction of the legal and social evils under which Israel groans. Hence the monotheistic idea puts all its treasures at the service of the messianic ideal. The religion of Israel is a religion of hope. The goal, as the prophets see it, is a good that would deny and gainsay itself, were there not in store for history a true commonwealth wherein righteousness, true law, shall flow down like a mountain river. The God of Israel must manifest himself as the creator of a state or church wherein the best things shall be the things that all men may share.

All peoples have their creation-myths. To think of God as making the world by an act of will is natural to man, because it is in closest analogy with what is deepest in himself. But it is in Israel alone that the myth of creation rises into a dogma. Among the other gifted peoples of antiquity, when experience ripened, the thought of creation was either absorbed by speculative pantheism or gave way to the idea of emanation. In Israel alone did the primitive myth rise to the weight and dignity of a dogma—a mature and impassioned conviction.

The creation of the ideal Israel is the center of interest with the prophets. The dogma of the creation of the world, of nature, proceeds from it and is auxiliary to it. The Second Isaiah, writing in the darkness of the Exile, foretells, with intense enthusiasm, God's creation of a new Israel out of political and social nothing. At the same time he publishes, far more at length than any prophet before him, the doctrine that God has created the world. The spiritual fact, God's creation of his people, gives color and intensity to the doctrine regarding the divine creatorhood at large. But while he is the most striking example of the spiritual solidarity between the eager hope of a new Israel and the dogma of creation, he is by no means the only one. The prophets, from Amos down, are with him. They



write in order to push back into the past the ground for their belief in the future. They interpret history in terms of the social ideal. They view the origin of the world in the light of the social conscience that glows and burns in Israel. The real Israel lags far behind the ideal Israel. But the ideal must overcome and pervade the real, else it loses its scepter, swooning out of this harsh world like Arthur, or reigning, if at all, like the long-haired Merovingian kings, while the politician and the trader spread themselves as mayors of the palace and do the ruling. The contradiction between the ideal and the real must be overcome in the ideal's favor. The prophets express their confidence in this victory by the dogma concerning the creativeness of good, the creatorhood of God.

God is creator. By virtue of his creative character he is also the absolute critic of Israel, the unsleeping and unsparing critic of the contemporary political and social order. The vision of the Judgment day is the vision of God's triumph, that is, of the triumph of the conscience of Israel over the world. The prophet holds up before contemporary society the ideal of the society that is to be, that must be, unless the idea of good is to be wholly unraveled. The ideal is both an inspiration and a condemnation. And it draws its power to inspire, its right to condemn, from the fact that its title to consciousness, its claim on conscience, is vested in the creativeness of good, in the creative character of God.

The exaltation of God above nature manifests itself in the prohibition of image-worship, a prohibition regarding which it has been truly said that it rang the death-knell of art in Israel. But we are dealing here only with a most illustrious example of the law that every great virtue must have its attendant defect. Now the virtue was the exaltation of the ideal. And the ideal, thus held high above nature, was a thoroughly social ideal, which put the ban upon every form of good that refused to seek entrance into the common life. The exaltation of God above nature, into the place of the creator of nature, indicated the presence in Israel of a social conscience that refused to accept as authoritative the existing standard of social values.

In the study of the second period in the history of the dogma

of creation—Christianity in its relations with the Mediterranean world—I take the liberty of shutting in our view to the apologetic period of Christian experience, the second and third centuries. Beyond this period lies the New Testament. But I shall not notice it, partly by reason of the time-limits of this article, and partly because the apostolic experience, being shaped, as the bulk of it undoubtedly was, by the relations with or opposition to Judaism, did not need to come out into the open with the dogma of creation. It could safely take that dogma for granted and give itself to other things. This side of the apologetic period lies the dogmatic development of Christianity in the Nicene age. Of this also I shall take no notice. When the speculative process gets in full career, it is apt to leave popular feeling a longer or shorter distance behind it. While speculative theology, in the long run, is a necessity, yet much of the energy that goes into it is directed thither by a theological leisure that sits more or less at ease regarding immediate and pressing problems. On the contrary, when an age is wholly apologetic, the dogmatic reason travels without a baggage-train, living upon the country it moves over. Its thought has the immediacy and vitality of a good after-dinner speech. It has no eye save for immediate necessities and urgent practical problems. Its reason is deeply colored by sensation. Consequently it yields us far better data for our subject—the social ideal in relation to the dogma of creation.

The task of Christianity in the apologetic period was the creation of a new community, alive with motives new and mighty to grasp and master the common consciousness, ennobling it by making it native to greater privileges and vaster responsibilities. Confronting a hostile heathen society and a jealous heathen empire, the Apologetes all spoke through Ignatius when he said: "Christianity, when it is hated by the world, does not make its fortune by the process of logical persuasion, but by great-hearted living." To create a new type of society first and not to live the life of reason and contemplation until that great piece of work had been solidly done—this was the task of Christianity in the age of the Apologetes. In such an age, busy

with such a work, the social will fills the whole center of the field of attention. The history of the relation between the social will and the speculative reason remains to be written. But it is easy to find proof of the assertion that they cannot both claim at the same time the full attention of the men of light and leading. Thus in Greece, the Marathonian man, who had built and upheld the state, could not keep the peace with the man of philosophic leisure. Again, the history of our country is in point. We have passed out of our pioneer period, where our energies had to go into the taming of a continent, and now, with vast possibilities of leisure bestowed upon us by the greatest fortune any people ever made, we are confronted by a sort of temporary antinomy between the need of culture and the need of an imperious, resistless purpose bearing upon the broad issues of democracy. And, feeding on that antinomy, many good Americans become constitutional dyspeptics.

It is in general true to say that an age or a community that has a vast and pressing practical task laid upon it has nothing better than a bare secondary attention to give to the interests of the speculative reason. Hence its thought keeps very close to the ground of the immediately needful. In the period before us this was the case. The task set by history was eminently practical. It was to do the pioneer work of the Catholic church by starting and getting well under way all the great institutions and tendencies which were to mould the spiritual life of the West for the next fifteen hundred years. The founding of the episcopate, the beginning of the doctrine of the canon, the shaping of the ideas of tradition, the commencement of canon law—all these things were begun and clearly blocked out in this period. To build a new society and to create the institutions it should use as its tools, was the task. The social will in the new community was paramount. Hence the dogmas it made use of were in no sense the mental luxury of theological leisure. They sprang from the heart of a deep, albeit in some ways a narrow, experience.

Here was the field of consciousness upon which the dogma of creation found its full development. In the Old Testament

period the dogma had not meant a creation out of nothing, as the exegesis of Gen. 1 : 1 seems to show plainly. The belief in a creation out of nothing came late into the mind of the Jewish church, the first clear expression of it being found in the second book of Maccabees. But in our period the belief becomes the staple of common consciousness. Christianity stood in mortal enmity with a vast, overshadowing heathen society and power. Herein its situation resembled, in a manner, the situation of the Jewish church before the time of Christ. In one fundamental point, however, the position of Christianity was radically different from that of Judaism. The Jewish church was only in part a church, it was still in part a state. Although the converts from heathendom were not a few, yet, in effect, they were mere hangers-on of Judaism. Full membership in the Jewish church was not only an affair of the soul. It was also a matter of genealogy and race. Hence it was impossible for Judaism to feel the full logical force of the heathen view of the world and of life. But membership in the Christian church was altogether a matter of the soul. The Jewish Christians, after the first century, became an insignificant sect. The whole efficient body of the church was made up of people heathen by descent and by former experience. Consequently the full logical force of the heathen view of life and the heathen theory of the world pressed upon the Christian reason. There is no war like a civil war to stir up principles from the bottom. Now the war of the Apologists was a kind of civil war, whose battlefields were the inner lives of the heathen who had become Christians. On such fields the fighting is hard, without ceremony and without mercy.

This civil war of the mind is best followed in the fierce debate between the Catholic church and those Gnostic sects which claimed the right of full suffrage in her councils. Now there are two main features of the Gnostics' view. First, their denial of the doctrine of creation, or their incapacity to appreciate the spiritual significance of the dogma. They put emanation in its place. And in well nigh every case there followed the result that the world about us was conceived to be the result of ignorance or of passion. In opposition to this conception of the

world immediately about us, as well as in opposition to Greek philosophy at large, the Apologetes proclaimed, with almost riotous emphasis, the doctrine of a creation out of nothing. And their purpose in so doing was not in the least speculative, but altogether practical and ethical.

The second main characteristic of Gnosticism was the spiritual stratification of humanity. Souls are not, according to the Gnostics, of one kind, nor have they a common divine paternity. Some souls are by nature elect and beautiful; while other souls are by nature incapable of a thorough salvation. The best the divine goodness can do for them is to overwhelm them, in the last chapter of the story, with a vast ignorance, so that they shall cease to desire what their nature forbids them to attain. But, in opposition to this, the Apologetes published the belief that every child of man was capable of a complete salvation, and might be brought level with the highest good. "Christians are not born but made," said Tertullian. Celsus, in effect, taunted the Christians with undertaking to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, when they set out to make the commonest man native to the full truth about the divine, that is, the permanently significant and interesting things. And Christianity joyously accepted the taunt. It proclaimed the full right of the lowliest man to know all about God, and held out to him the hope of full suffrage in things eternal. It proclaimed a universal capacity for redemption. And, to insure this capacity, it urged with vehemence, even with passion, the belief in the absolute creatorhood of God, in a creativeness that actually created a world out of nothing.

The whole purpose of the dogma of creation, as the Apologetes pressed it upon consciousness, was to make intelligible the possibility of a vast society wherein the true goods, the spiritual goods, should all be held in common. However great may be the intellectual difficulties that beset the dogma, it was not the output of an arrogant theological establishment, careless of or indifferent to reason, but the mental product of a strenuous and impassioned social will, taking with full seriousness its right to interpret the universe, wherein it found itself, in the light of its

deep desire to establish the kingdom of God and to make all sorts and conditions of men native to the highest good. The idea of God registers humanity's final estimate of itself. The attitude of God carries with it, for consciousness, the attitude of the ideal toward the real that lags so far and so persistently behind it. The absolute creatorhood of God goes along with the masterful creativeness of human good. His exaltation above nature involves the exaltation of the human "ought-to-be" above the "is." And the dogma of creation out of nothing is the expression of a profound belief in the power of the spiritual to drive its aim and purpose through the material.

Out of this experience, personal and vital, staking all upon the possibility of a great and exhaustless common good, came the first article of the creed—I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. It were useless to give quotations. For it is impossible to read the writers of the second and third centuries, without stumbling upon quotations at almost every turn. The common Christian consciousness, heartily believing in the kingdom of God, assessed the material universe in terms of its faith, by proclaiming the divine creatorhood, the creativeness of good, in the most autocratic form, even as a creation out of nothing.

Strikingly enough, the two original contributions made by this common consciousness to literature were the autobiography and the philosophy of history. The autobiography sprang from the fact that for Christianity the soul of man was the center of interest. The philosophy of history sprang from the fact that the Christian consciousness was, on the one hand, deeply convinced that a world-wide career awaited it and claimed the whole world for its province; while, on the other hand, it leaned with all its weight upon the belief in God's mastery of nature and history. The prophets of Israel first made possible the problem of history. The Latin fathers first clearly conceived the plan of universal history. Hinted at by Minucius Felix, developed by Augustine, the idea was carried out by Orosius, and a new type was given to the world's literature. It is a pregnant fact. The Christian consciousness, inheriting from the prophets the belief

that history moves toward a moral goal and the cognate belief that a sovereign, creative good, unsleeping and unsparing in its criticism of contemporary politics and society, watches over history, deployed this faith upon the broad field of the Roman empire. The faith of Christianity put forth, in opposition to the life and ideals of the day, the dogma of the absolute creativeness of the ideal, of God's creation of the world out of nothing. The philosophy of history came in the train of this dogma. For the mainspring of the mental action that produced it was the conviction that the creative good is carrying forward towards a rational and coherent conclusion the historical process which the creative good has set on foot.

When we turn from the Mediterranean world to our own, we discover two tendencies of our time which closely concern the subject in hand. One is the growing bulk of human consciousness homogeneous enough to be open to the inspiration or to the contagion of common emotions. De Tocqueville drew attention to the fact that the American democracy was peculiarly subject to great waves of feeling. The fact seems certain. And its explanation is simple. America has no strongholds of local feeling and privilege such as the feudal constitution of mediæval Europe has bequeathed to modern Europe. The moment, therefore, that a great public emotion gets well started, there is nothing that can withstand or even check its advance. And America, in this matter, is representative of a growing tendency in our age. It is a truly notable feature of the life of our period that human consciousness is on the way to attain a vast and homogeneous bulk. Antiquity knew nothing that approached it. Herodotus tells us that one-half of Babylon did not know for several days that the other half had been captured and sacked. Allowing for a slight use of the long bow, this might be taken as typical of a civilization whose body corporate is loose-jointed and incoherent. Li Hung Chang informed us that many millions of Chinamen had never heard of the war with Japan. This makes antiquity contemporary. The ancient body politic was loose-jointed. The bulk of human consciousness was neither vast nor homogeneous. The Roman empire, the first

true state on a large scale, makes the nearest approach to modern conditions. But it is a remote approach. Steam and electricity and the printing-press are fast creating a phenomenon new to history. The bulk of human consciousness is vast. And it lies open, as never before, to thrills of common feeling and purpose.

The other tendency of our time to which I would call attention is the quality of the serious thinking that goes on among us. In antiquity, thought, when it became thorough, easily turned toward the mysteries of abstract being, and built up a would-be science of ontology. It was a very long step from the phrontistery where reason sought to master itself, to the agora where reason sought to master the common life and purpose. But in our day this is not so. The severe and thorough thought of our time goes, for the greater part of it, into scientific and historical study. Now both the scientific and the historical spirit, by reason of their nature and bias, are close to the common consciousness. To science, with her grand passion for knowledge of the visible universe, the visible body of human society must needs be an object of consuming interest. Science does not stand, as monastic mysticism stood, face towards the transcendent unity of things, but stands face towards the common life, with a heart on fire to interpret nature to the race. The historical spirit, also, is carried by its inmost bias and bent toward a consuming interest in the human society, to the study of whose autobiography it gives its whole strength. It is, then, a short step, in our day, from the phrontistery to the agora.

It is in the light of these two tendencies, first, the vast and growing bulk and homogeneousness of contemporary human consciousness; second, the nearness of the place where our best thinking is done to the place where thought seeks to make the common experience understand itself in order to respect itself, that the true significance of what we loosely call the social question may best be seen. Its meaning is that the supreme object of all deep thought should be to understand clearly the facts of our social existence and to interpret them sanely; and that the main end of all noble labor should be to translate deep thought



into social action and social manners. Monasticism has fallen into a three-fold discredit. It is unscientific, in that it would have the state breed its citizens from an inferior spiritual stock. It is unheroic, in that it takes the short cut to the discovery of the mystical unity within the rebellious manifold of the common human life. And in principle it takes the spiritual bloom and fragrance from citizenship in that it makes civic duties secondary and subordinate. All deep thought, all high labor must give themselves more and more to the interpretation and sanctification of the historical human life. Thought and labor must wed in order to give birth and breeding to a strong and unwearying social conscience.

When I say "social conscience," I take the same freedom of vagueness which I exercised upon the phrase "social ideal." Even as the social ideal is no particular kind of ideal, but just the authoritative prescription that there shall be ideals and that each ideal shall joyously pay its taxes for the common good, so the social conscience does not mean that this or that specific form of conscience is the only true form, but that there shall be an authoritative sense of a good larger in its scope than recorded human appreciation, and wider in its application than contemporary society believes to be possible, and that this sense of good shall seek admission to the agora and the caucus, under penalty of losing its authority in case it does not ultimately succeed. The existence of a social conscience implies the existence of an increasing number of men who tax themselves, who are the embodied, self-executing law of the commonwealth. To provide for the steady multiplication of such men is the task set before our time by universal history.

We are facing conditions which resemble, in some ways, those which led the Stoics to coin the term conscience. The framework of dogma whereupon the feeling and imagination of our forefathers climbed easily towards the unseen issues and interest of life, is out of repair. And not only in the field of dogma have axioms fallen under suspicion. Criticism is busy everywhere. The principle of relativity lays its hand upon all our experience. Paley could say with truth in his day: "Nothing

is so soon made as a maxim." But we cannot say it. The art of making maxims is, for the time being, a lost art. As the personal element within us—that part of us which values self-knowledge and self-masterhood as the pearl of great price—looks down into the depths of the human nature within us it sees stretching out before it a mighty work to be done. The nature in us that confronts the person in us has more and deeper relations with the visible world than our forefathers knew and confessed. And so, the person in us, looking at the nature in us, is forced to look forth into the nature of humanity at large. Conscience cannot be content with an interior or domestic puritanism. It must needs take the humanity of the race for its province. The question—How shall the personal element in us, the element that makes for self-knowledge and self-mastery, become sovereign over our nature? opens wide into the question—How shall humanity at large be lifted to the level of self-knowledge and self-mastery? Moreover we dare not appeal the question to the life beyond. We must fight the battle out here in order to be worthy of the life beyond.

Plotinus described conscience as following one's true self. We cannot find a happier phrase. Conscience is that authority within us that compels us to follow ourselves. But the true self, as we see it, is inseparable from the social self. In us, as in the prophets, the holy thing called personality, sleepless and untiring in its criticism of our nature, of our natural temperament and bias, must likewise be a sleepless, fearless, and untiring critic of the society about us, of humanity at large. Criticism, however, without creative energy, is a morbid and unwholesome thing. It is so in literature. It is so in life. If the ethical will is to have a real body and edge, if conscience is to bring us a true word from the unseen and concerning the unseen, a word quick and powerful, edged like a sword, and penetrating even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, critical of the passions and thoughts of the heart, it must be a creative word. The person in us must stand creatively towards the nature in us.

Likewise, if the social conscience in us—and our conscience is in the long run social or nothing—is to kindle a fire of judg-

ment in the midst of contemporary society, a fire that may not be quenched, it must be the judicial aspect of a creative consciousness. For criticism, without creativeness, is a disease, the mood of a humanity living between a world that is dead and a world that is powerless to be born.

The doctrine of the conscience, personal and social, imposes upon ethics the task of conceiving, training, and equipping a creative human will. A new chapter in the history of conscience is opening. Our world is indeed like the Stoics' world in some ways. But far more is it unlike. We do not break, as they did, with the positive and definite, in order to get the universal. In our vision of the city of the universe, the ground under our feet, America, becomes holy ground. Stoicism had the taint of monasticism in it. But, today, the conscience must be in everything a citizen. It cannot, however, become and remain a whole-hearted citizen, unless it be endowed with the wherewithal of the creative life. We cannot live at close quarters with Tammany and the slums and the doings of the Christian powers in China unless we know that we can conquer the brute in nature and in ourselves. Without the belief in a creative goodness, when once the optimism inherent in the red blood of youth and the expansiveness attending the wholesale exploitation of the earth shall have passed, conscience will again become a pensioner to the powers that be; or else the best men, in order to save their self-respect, will betake themselves to the monastery, and there proceed to deny the primary spiritual reality of that social and historical order of things which they shall have given up all hope of saving. I repeat that the doctrine of conscience lays upon ethics the unavoidable task of conceiving and training and equipping a creative human will.

Furthermore, the social conscience must insist upon its authority over the term "nature." Surely, human society has as firm a footing and as strong a right within "nature" as science itself. Now there are desires and purposes set deep in the constitution of humanity. Without them history were a tale told by an idiot. They are as organic to the universe as the tides and the stars. Our conception of nature must open to receive

them, it must enlarge itself to take in the personal and social conscience with its needs. Professor James, in a highly suggestive essay, has coupled together the fact of reflex action and the argument for theism. Possibly the thought may be carried farther than he has taken it. How great is the extent and how wide the scope of reflex action, regarded as a total! The mighty work of art called language, in all its sweep and consequence. The even mightier, because deeper and more causative thing, called human society in its full promise and potency. This is the reflex action wherewith we answer the stimulus of the universe.

The concept "nature" must, therefore, open to admit the fact and the obligations of the social conscience. In the long run need governs theory. The supreme need of humanity is to keep house and to go forward to the methods of the higher house-keeping in history. Society must have an ever-growing number of men who shall doom themselves, men who shall lay afresh in the deep of their own being the foundations of social obligation. In men of this kind, and in them alone, the social will comes to the knowledge of itself,

Now the humanity that dooms itself, that faces, without flinching, all the opportunities and responsibilities of contemporary society, must have a solid ground of obligation for the working will to stand upon. The social will that enters these typical men, and seeks through them a cleansing and saving knowledge of its own bent and purpose, is an imperious and resistless will. The bulk of human consciousness is vast. It is becoming more and more close-knit. The distance from the place where the world's thinking is done to the place where the world's will is in play is but a step. The social will claims and must assert the right of eminent domain. By a great inner self-creative act of faith it takes the sincerity of the universe for granted. Nature must be interpreted or must reveal herself as in touch and sympathy with that working will, without which there were no permanent possibility of science or culture. The social will cannot labor save for some good. The good it labors for is a good that would count itself unholy and debased if it does not com-

municate and spread itself. It is a good that takes up an aggressive and creative attitude towards the foul and waste portions of our common humanity. Nature must open herself to the social will. Her resources must be conceived or imagined or felt as being at the service of the social will and conscience.

All forms of religion are forms of faith in the sincerity of the universe. When the social will or conscience insists upon its right to take itself with full seriousness by reason of its faith in the sincerity of the universe, it has, whether consciously or unconsciously, given itself up to religious feeling. The synthesis of feeling whereby it finds or makes itself at home in the universe is a thoroughly religious act. The covenant it establishes or discovers between it and the unseen good is a religious covenant.

What relations, then, must be conceived or imagined, or felt or revealed, as subsisting between the unseen good and the resources of nature? The doctrine of ends necessitates a doctrine of origins. The end or ideal of history is an ideal that rises up out of the consciousness and experience of the race, and its validity and authority may not be impugned save under penalty of impairing the validity of all the processes of experience. Now the end or ideal held up before a contemporary society that seeks to entrench itself in privilege and cover with the noble name of law its private prerogatives, is the ideal of a good that exists only to impart itself and to be creative. The doctrine of ends will draw after it a doctrine of beginnings. The dogma of creation will be conceived and born anew. There is an eternal good that knows itself perfectly; and our faint struggles after self-knowledge are the promise of growth into its likeness. There is an eternal good that masters itself wholly; and our small measure of self-mastery is in its image. This eternal good created the world. So must the social conscience believe and confess, unless noble imagination and heroic will, their roots being robbed of foothold and food, are to wither from the top.

We are passing through a righteous revolt against dogma. The revolt is righteous because the body of dogma that has come down to us has put on the airs of infallibility, and also

because, like the old conception of final causes, it has interfered with the free and patient study and interpretation of the visible universe wherein the race has written its autobiography. But when dogma shall have been delivered from infallibility and from impertinence, the dogmatic process must needs reassert its vitality. Magnificence, as the poet Spenser has said, is the very marrow of virtue. But we cannot have, in permanence, the magnificence of virtue which the social conscience calls for, without dogmatic interpretations of the relation between the good which we adore and serve and the resources of the universe. If we do not have dogmas, we shall revert to myths.